March 29, 2004

1966 Burton St SE
Apt 26
Grand Rapids MI 49506

Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear FCC:

I am writing in support of the American Radio Relay League's Petition RM-10867. This is important to the Amateur Radio Service and the United States of America's continuing encouragement of those interested in pursuing a career in the telecommunication arts.

The past several years have proven that the Amateur Radio Service is still needed and relevant.

From a public service viewpoint, our contributions as communications providers for 9/11 and the Oklahoma bombing are well known. Tornados, hurricanes, and last year's western forest fires are also sings of our community involvement.

We are contributing from a technical point of view, as well. Several new Amateur Radio Satellites are due to be launched in the near future. It is the Amateur Service that has perfected digital modes such as PSK31, allowing weak signal digital communication on a worldwide basis. JT44 (and similar modes) allow EME (Earth-Moon-Earth) paths to be bridged on a highly predictable basis with low power and modest antennas.

Radio Amateurs must continue their growth in civil service and technical development of all their frequencies.

I support the American Radio Relay League's RM-10867 for several reasons.

First, we need an entry-level license class that will attract and reward those who wish to use current computer based communication modes. This license must also encourage the motivated, knowledgeable computer user or computer professional who is already sophisticated in digital communication over wire services as well as wireless networks to enter our avocation. We also need to encourage the potential amateur who is a beginner at both computers and the radio arts. In addition, we need to give *both* these groups the opportunity to develop new digital modes using the Amateur Service as the foundation.

The license class must encourage the use not only of commercial equipment, but must continue our tradition of building home constructed and kit station apparatus. There are a number of low power kits out on the market for not only CW (Morse), but also SSB (single sideband phone) and PSK31. Imagine the holder of this new license class who puts herself through an undergraduate school program in Electrical Engineering by selling her own 50 Watt kit that will allow a newly developed digital mode to work moon bounce with an old laptop and a 25 element yagi! We need to have a new user be able to get the kick and thrill of what every generation of radio amateur has known!

Lastly, we need to give such a group of entry-level licenses an opportunity to taste a bit of all the other facets that the Amateur Radio Service can provide. The entry-level license that is proposed by the American Radio Relay League will give a broad sample of everything the Amateur Radio Service can offer: Worldwide DX with low power Morse (keeping our sweetly melodic tradition alive with new love and dedication *augmented by* computerized weak-signal enhancement), the development of current and new digital modes (as noted above), and the ready fraternity of Single Sideband Radiotelephone. The license class should offer FM repeaters and the chance to taste Amateur Satellites and VHF-UHF DX of many kinds on our 50, 144, 222, and 430 MHz bands. An entry-level class for Amateur Radio should not relegate its holders to a lonely underutilized radio sub-culture. It must give a number of lanes of a multi-lane highway. An entry-level class for Amateur Radio must not keep a person with a Master's Degree in Information Technology OUT of Amateur Radio due to the barrier of a Morse code test. It must not keep the motivated teen who would other wise use the internet exclusively out of ham radio for the same reason. A

competent Radio Amateur is competent based on technical contributions in 21st century communication arts.

I wholly support the American Radio Relay League's RM-10867. It should be adapted as soon as is possible.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

John F. Wasciuk
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